(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government propose to release said land?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Threat posed by open Indo-Nepal Border

†2857. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about one thousand five hundred K.M. Indo-Nepal open border could proved to be a serious threat in view of the present Terrorist activities;

(b) whether there is need to re-consider the Indo-Nepal Trade and Transit Treaty;

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to be vigilant towards the rising threats and the plan formulated by Government in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not considering the matter seriously?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Government is concerned about the ISI misusing the Nepalese territory and the open India-Nepal border for activities inimical to India's interest. These issues have been taken up with the Government of Nepal and both sides have agreed that they would not allow their territory to be used for activities inimical to the interests of either country. Bilateral institutional mechanisms have also been evolved to jointly address issues relating to maintenance of peace and prevention of criminal activities in the border areas. Further, the Special Service Bureau is being deployed along the border with Nepal to strengthen security in the border areas.

The India-Nepal Trade Treaty has been renewed after incorporating suitable modifications to the Protocol to the Treaty without changing the basic spirit and framework of the Treaty. Regular dialogue of Customs officials also takes place under the Agreement for Cooperation to Control

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

unauthorised trade. As regards the India-Nepal Transit Treaty, it was signed in 1999 and is valid for seven years.

Setting up task force for prevention from Nuclear and Biological Warfare

†2858. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to raise a task force for protection from nuclear and bio-attack;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the task force is likely to be raised?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, Government have initiated necessary steps to ensure protection from nuclear and bio-attack. It would not be in the interest of national security to disclose further details in this regard.

Prevention of civilian Sportsmen from practising on Defence Play Grounds

2859. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Defence authorities are preventing civilian Sportsmen from practising on the Play Grounds of Defence cantonment areas in several parts of India and specially in Andhra Pradesh at Lal-Bazar (Trimulgherry of Sec'bad cantonment) and other places; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Play grounds of civil areas maintained by Cantonment Boards including Secunderabad are meant for the public use and there is no question of preventing sportsmen practising in these play grounds. However, certain open grounds located on A-1 Defence land are meant for exclusive use by the Army and request received at times from various sports organisations for allotment/use of such grounds are not acceded to, as use of A-1 Defence land for any purpose other than the Army is not permitted as per prevailing Defence Land Policy.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.